

How Many More Cities Must Burn To Revive That One Brief Spark?

"The Administration had been cool to the riot commission's multi-billion dollar recommendations, except for the brief spark of interest after Dr. King's death."

—Washington Post, April 19, from the Johnson ranch

after a briefing at which the press was told he had shelved plans to ask a joint session of Congress for a big program like that urged by the Commission on Civil Disorders to deal with black unrest.

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Why Not Timbuktu or Easter Island?

Lyndon Johnson does not give the impression of a man eager to reach the peace table. He seems, on the contrary, sorry that he ever brought the matter up. Little more than a year ago in his letter of Feb. 6, 1967, to Ho Chi Minh, Johnson suggested that peace talks might be held in Moscow. Now he balks even at Pnom Penh or Warsaw. He seems to have Walt Rostow feverishly thumbing through the geography books for places Hanoi would be most likely to turn down. The presence of an Embassy and adequate communications are among the conditions sprouting up all around Mr. Johnson's often repeated "anywhere, any time". But the latest batch of 10 suggestions are all countries in which Hanoi has no Embassy. And in two of them the only places remotely describable as cities—Kabul in Afghanistan and Katmandu in Nepal—may not even have a telegraph office. Only Timbuktu or Easter Island could be more exotic. Lyndon Johnson is willing to show up anywhere Ho Chi Minh won't go.

Negotiation or Sporting Event?

In that earlier letter to Ho, Johnson suggested "bilateral discussions." Now he is beginning to give out invitations wholesale. Each invitation adds another obstacle to the choice of a site, and if talks ever do get underway the more kibbitzers the less the danger of reaching an agreement. One of the newer conditions is adequate press facilities. Johnson normally is not so tender of the press. He is no goldfish-bowl operator. When he really wants to make a deal, he gets his prospect alone and pulls down the blinds. In his letter to Ho last year suggesting peace talks in Moscow Johnson felt sure of rejection because Hanoi had insisted all along on complete and unconditional cessation of bombings as a precondition. He must have felt equally secure on March 31 when he asked Hanoi to talk while bombing went on between the 17th and 20th parallels. It must have been a harrowing experience when this time Ho tricked him by accepting. The White House may be piling up conditions to protect it from a similar surprise in the future. Johnson would like to go on getting credit for making peace offers so long as he can be sure nothing will come of them.

"Everything is unclear", U Thant told the Associated Press as he left New York April 20 for Paris. This succinctly summarizes the situation. I see several significant strands as I try to unravel what Johnson has been weaving. One is that anti-aircraft defenses around Hanoi and Haiphong had made bombing in that area prohibitively expensive. Roger

Recipe For Race War

In the controversy over Mayor Daley's "shoot to kill" order, one vital aspect needs emphasis. Daley would make the policeman an instant prosecutor, jury and judge. We have courts to determine guilt. Looting, even arson, are not capital offenses. It takes only the slightest encouragement to make the police trigger-happy where blacks are concerned. Adam Clayton Powell was right when he said at his Bimini press conference (New York Times, April 20), "First we shoot to kill looters and shoot to kill arsonists, then we shoot to maim persons for disorderly conduct, then breach of the peace and finally we shoot niggers just for being niggers." London's tumultuous Easter demonstrations, including a bottle-throwing at the Daily Mirror office, were contained without serious trouble by bobbies armed only with night sticks. Here police brutality has been the immediate precipitant of almost every black uprising. The quickest way to turn them into full-scale race war is to weaken restraints on police forces all too permeated by race hate.

Hilsman, Assistant Secretary of State For Far Eastern Affairs in 1963-64, reported in the April issue of *Foreign Affairs* quarterly that "as of several months ago" the bombing of the North was estimated to have cost the U.S. \$6 billion "while the dollar value of the facilities destroyed in the North is estimated to be \$340 million." On this basis, Hilsman said, "some experts argue that an end to the bombing might actually result in a military gain rather than a loss."

Hilsman said the targets are few and most of them easily repaired. He quotes one discouraged pilot as saying, "The hell of it is that we fly through all that flak for what? To attack a two-bit bridge that we've already knocked down five or six times. The damned center spans are now made of wood, and they put them up again in hours." In any case the weather above the 20th parallel has been bad; the monsoon in that area won't lift until May. So in the haggling within Administration councils, it was decided to limit the bombing to the Panhandle where there has been little anti-aircraft. As an extra dividend to the hawks, it was decided to try and do as much bombing in that narrow coastal strip as had previously been done in all of North Vietnam.

The second strand in the policy shift was to borrow a favorite cliché of the Kennedy brothers and propose to shift more of the war to the South Vietnamese. Johnson always

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likes to steal the opposition's thunder, and this was the easiest way out when confronted with Westmoreland's demand for 200,000 troops. This made Gen. Creighton Abrams the logical candidate to succeed Westmoreland since he has been working with the ARVN forces, and has been their advocate in asking for more and better weapons.* As Secretary Clifford explained at his press conference April 11, the ARVN forces are to be given "a degree of preference" in the supply of "our most modern weapons" because we want to "work ourselves into a posture, where the South Vietnamese will take over the war."

Nothing Learned in 7 Costly Years

This is *really* clutching at a straw. There wouldn't be a half million U.S. troops in South Vietnam if the Saigon ruling clique over the past decade hadn't demonstrated its utter political and military incapacity. They themselves know it. "We are not going to press for real all-out mobilization," one Senator blurted out during the new draft law debate in the Saigon legislature (*Washington Post*, April 18), "We have to appease American public opinion by showing we are trying to do something." A day after Robert Kennedy said that if elected President he "would try to bring American troops home and substitute South Vietnamese soldiers", Peter Braestrup reported from Saigon (*Washington Post*, April 15), "few U.S. or South Vietnamese military men see this as a practical proposition." He reported that if the U.S. troops pulled out, the ARVN forces would have to abandon the five northern provinces including Hue and Danang "just to hold their own further South." This realistic if gloomy estimate illustrates the continued and wondrous capacity of the U.S. government to adopt policies which a substantial portion of its own military and diplomatic bureaucracy privately think make no sense.

Nevertheless this decision to shift the burden of the war to the South Vietnamese must have decisive impact on the third strand of policy—to make another try at winning by peace talks what the U.S. has been unable to win by military

* From a different point of view we can't see much sense in putting a World War II tank General into command of a war that calls for political finesse.

Immobile As Ever

Q. Premier Nguyen Van Loc of South Vietnam has made another South Vietnamese statement opposing a coalition government. I'd like to know if the statement that we were read here on December 8 in which we announced our opposition to the imposition of any coalition government on South Vietnam and said that we oppose any proposal which would turn the Government of South Vietnam over to the National Liberation Front—whether or not that is still our policy? A. Yes.

Q. Could I go a step further and ask if the Secretary's statement on January 15—and I quote him: "The future of South Vietnam could not be decided without full participation of the legally constituted government of South Vietnam." Is that still our policy? A. Yes.

—State Dept. Press Briefing, April 17.

means, and that is an "independent" non-Communist South Vietnam.

Johnson's new "peace" offer and his "abdication" served to disarm the opposition and throw the peace movement off balance. (McCarthy has proven much smarter and abler than Kennedy in seeing through it.) The best guess is that he did not expect Hanoi to accept his offer, and this would give him a chance to have both credit for a peace move and later an excuse (when the monsoon ends) to resume full bombing of the North if he wants to. Hanoi by its qualified acceptance put the ball back into his court. But how can Johnson pursue the policy of handing over the war to the South Vietnamese, how can he get Thieu to mobilize more men, if at the same time he agrees with Hanoi's demand that all bombing end before peace talks begin?

As I reconstruct the scenario of events, Thieu must ask Washington for two or three years leeway to prove that he can take over the war. To stop the bombing and enter on talks now would pull the rug from under the Saigon military regime and Mr. Johnson's hopes. A coalition or a neutralist regime would seem to Johnson that "fake solution" he says he will never accept. So Johnson must stall as long as he can before going to the conference table, and seize on every possible way to delay a conclusion when he gets there. If there are no talks or the prospect of talks breaks down

The One Way In Which Our Troops and the South Vietnamese Army Are Alike

"We thought you were the ice cream coming in," the American corporal shouted in a disappointed tone above the roar of the helicopter engines as we landed at the old French fort—a hilltop landing zone commanding Highway Nine between Khe Sanh and the Laotian frontier.

Everyone here had heard vague reports about proposed peace talks between Hanoi and Washington. There was no interest in where the talks would be held or what decision reached. "Charlie"—the Viet Cong—"can have the whole country so far as I'm concerned," a young soldier said, adding that the theme song is, "We Wanna Go Home."

The lack of interest in the course of the war is in strong contrast to that of American troops in World War II. Men were then deeply interested in why and how they were fighting; this is not so today. Of course, there are many exceptions . . .

However, there is among every group of officers and NCOs—especially among the Marines—a hawkish set who would like to bomb more villages, burn more forests and

napalm more mountain-sides. They resent criticism and the fact that the public in the United States is not 100 per cent behind the war.

—Claire Hollingworth, *London Daily Telegraph*, April 18

I lived in Vietnam for thirty months and became acquainted with many Vietnam Air Force, and Army men. And almost without exception they have no heart for this war. So many of them have told me, Why should I fight. If I get killed my Commander will even pocket the insurance money due my family. Why fight for men who are getting rich by selling American material to the Viet Congs. The home I lived in while in Saigon rented for more than three hundred per month. The Vietnam official who owned the home told me it cost him sixty five hundred to build. Of course the rent was paid for by U.S. taxpayers.

—From the letter to Sen. Gruening released by the Senate Subcommittee on Foreign Aid Expenditures, which charged that Ky had been involved in opium smuggling.

too early, his popularity will go down again and his credibility gap widen as never before. This is the bind in which Hanoi has put him.

The Always Victorious Press Releases

But Johnson is no Joshua to bid time stand still. The shadows of three crises lie ahead. One is military. The U.S. military are doing splendidly again—in the field of public relations. Khe Sanh is advertised as a victory for airpower and "Operation Complete Victory" (What will they call the next one? Operation *Even More Complete Victory*?) is sweeping the enemy victoriously away from Saigon. But the steady resumption of shelling day after day at Khe Sanh indicates the enemy didn't withdraw very far in that area. And on the night of April 16, for the first time since Tet, the Vietcong bombarded a South Vietnamese Reserve Officers School on the outskirts of Saigon, killing four and wounding 30 of the Saigon military; there were also heavy civilian casualties in the adjoining quarters for officers' families. This attack took place not far from the powerful U.S. air base at Bien Hoa and in the very heart of the area supposedly cleaned up by "Operation Complete Victory".

One of the most experienced war correspondents in South Vietnam, Francois Nivolon, in reporting this attack (*Le Figaro*, April 18) said "it has proved anew, and this will surprise no one here, that it is almost impossible to assure the security of the capital of South Vietnam and its environs." M. Nivolon recalled that after the Tet offensive representatives of the U.S. military command estimated that it would take ten divisions absolutely to guarantee the security of Saigon. That is roughly half the strength of the U.S. Army. It is clear that the enemy can still strike almost anywhere he chooses and that surprises may lie ahead. One cannot exclude a new offensive strong enough to unseat the Saigon regime, and replace it with Buddhist and other non-Communist elements willing to negotiate peace.

Two more crises loom up. One is reflected in the tightest money market since 1929; it threatens to throw the economy into a recession here and a depression abroad. It is making a conservative Congress even more stingy just when the poverty program must be stepped up. This brings us to the third and most important of the crises—that represented

It's Meant After All To Disable People

In Utah's desolate, wind-blown Skull Valley, Army bulldozers dug trenches late last month, soldiers from the Dugway Proving Ground tossed in the carcasses of about 6,000 sheep, and the 'dozers shoveled back the earth. In the small dining room of 46-bed Tooele Valley Hospital, over the Stansbury Mountains and 50 miles to the east, a doctor taking a coffee break heard the news and commented: "The sheep's worries are over. Now I'd start worrying about people."

Added surgeon Kelly H. Gubler, the hospital's chief of staff: "It's ridiculous for the Army to deny that a nerve-disabling chemical definitely caused the animals' death, or to softpedal the human health hazard. Some of the civilians who work at Dugway live in Tooele. They are instructed to go to Dugway for treatment if they become sick, day or night, but I've treated workers in the past for an overdose of anticholinesterase agents, even though the Army denied they were contaminated at the proving ground."

—*Medical World News*, April 12.

by the Poor Peoples March on Washington which begins a week from now.

From a rational point of view, this represents a national opportunity. It is based on non-violence and it seeks to unite the black and white poor. Its triumph would be a real blow to that "divisiveness" which has become Johnson's favorite new theme. From a black point of view, this is the first major effort to help the Negro poor. The new housing bill passed in the wake of, and at the cost, of Martin Luther King's life will only help the well-to-do Negro. The poor blacks riot and the better-off benefit. Now for the first time an Economic Bill of Rights will be demanded to give the poor of both races jobs and minimum income. As the town fills up and shanty-towns rise in the parks to house the demonstrators, friction and frustration will grow to dangerous heights. It will be a miracle if some incident does not set off a new wave of rioting. The American system is caught in its own rigidities and needs fresh leadership to survive. Johnson is still giving priority to the war in Vietnam. So long as he does, we cannot hope to meet at home the gravest confrontation since the Civil War.

April 22

It's Not Too Early To Begin Examining That Blank Check We Gave NATO

The testimony last week to the Committee on Foreign Affairs by NATO's Supreme Allied Commander Europe, General Lyman K. Lemnitzer, left in doubt the precise form and extent of United States commitments under the North Atlantic Treaty . . . In light of the difficulty we have encountered in attempting to fulfill what the President considers to be a commitment to South Vietnam under SEATO and the extent of our military support to 48 nations under the Foreign Assistance Program . . . I strongly urge that General Lemnitzer be recalled for further questioning. . . .

I further request that this testimony occur in open sessions of the Committee. Among the questions to which adequate answers have not been provided are these:

1. In the event that another NATO nation is determined by our President to be under attack, does he presently have constitutional authority to assign forces for the immediate use of the NATO integrated command?

2. If so, does our government consider this authority to be conditional or limited in any respect? For example,

must the country under attack first request assistance?

3. At what point, if any, in the application of military power to defend a NATO nation, would the President be required to secure formal approval of the Congress? Before ground forces in addition to those presently in Europe are sent? Before tactical nuclear weapons are used? Before strategic nuclear weapons are used?

4. Does the President have authority to commit U. S. forces if other NATO nations . . . fail to cooperate?

An item in the German Press Review reveals a different kind of concern . . . Observing that the U. S. is "protecting" South Vietnam largely by destroying it, the article questioned the value of similar U. S. protection for Germany. Especially significant in this case is the fact that Article V of the NATO Treaty, unlike Article IV of the SEATO Treaty, lacks the safeguard that action on the territory of an ally should not be taken except at the invitation of such an ally.

—Letter from Rep. Paul Findley (R-Ill.) to Chairman Morgan of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, April 9.

An Appeal to the Peace-Minded to Help the Reelection of Morse and Gruening

How the U.S. Press Covered Up New Revelations About the Pueblo

AMERICAN NEWSPAPER editors seem to be a timid lot. Their freedom of information report to their latest annual meeting called the Pueblo affair "a coverup job". But a few days earlier their papers cooperated in covering up the revelation on the Huntley-Brinkley show April 16 that the Pueblo was only 7½ miles from North Korea's coast, well within its 12-mile limits, before its seizure. When Defense and CIA were shown photostats of the Pueblo's log before the broadcast, neither denied their authenticity. Yet we only saw the story next morning in one paper, the *Baltimore Sun*. The London and Paris papers all gave it a big play, but it was hard to find in the U.S. press.

THE LONDON TIMES April 18 even carried a *New York Times* News Service dispatch saying that some of these photostats had been given to the *New York Times*. But they did not appear in the New York paper's own news columns. On April 20 the *New York Times* did run an editorial referring to "the photographs circulated by Pyongyang purporting to show Pueblo log entries within North Korea's territorial waters . . ." At press conference April 17 questions about the Huntley-Brinkley revelations elicited the usual equivocal replies. The State Department spokesman was asked whether it would make public those monitored messages the government keeps alluding to as proof that the Pueblo was *not* in territorial waters. "Well, I don't want to anticipate that," was the spokesman's answer, "but I don't want to rule it out either, for the present." This unwillingness to produce supposedly conclusive evidence was also widely unreported.

THIS IS A GOOD TIME to recall that J. Edgar Hoover, who is in charge of investigating the murder of the Rev. Martin Luther King, delighted white racists in November 1964 by calling him "the most notorious liar in the country." Not even after his death did Hoover offer an apology . . . Can't a panel of distinguished American political experts alert the U.S. public now, while it can still be avoided, that a new Vietnam is brewing in Europe under the Greek dictatorship we support? . . . A portent not to be missed is that Majority Leader Mansfield joined Gruening and Nelson in voting

The Semantic Wonders of U.S. Foreign Policy

My next word is "freedom." Formerly having reference to the absence of arbitrary political power in a society, the term is now defined more explicitly as the political condition of people who are not ruled by Communists. Thus, when we speak of "free societies", we may be referring to such peoples as the British, the French, the Swedes, the Paraguayans, the Greeks, the Spaniards and the Haitians. There are, of course, varying degrees of freedom in different societies, its extent being measured by the fervor of a government's hatred of Communism. We have as our authority on this point no less a semanticist than the distinguished Minority Leader of the Senate [Dirksen] who, when asked if he thought there was a free government in Greece, replied "Yes, I do. Just because they have a military junta for a specific purpose for a little while to shove back the Communist influence . . ."

—From Senator Fulbright's delightful address on Political Semantics to the American Society of Newspaper Editors, Washington, D.C., April 17.

against the new defense authorization bill. Morse was paired against it.

Hat's Off: To Chairman John W. Macy of the U.S. Civil Service Commission for declaring that the Court of Appeals decision in the Panama case was a specialized ruling and does not apply to the circulation of general anti-war statements by U.S. employees. The Panama case involved a policeman who was asked not to protest publicly the decision to hire Panamanian citizens on that hitherto "lily-white" force in the tense situation after the 1964 riots. The Court upheld his discharge and said freedom of speech for Federal employees was restricted in such circumstances.

SOS: Morse and Gruening, the only two Senators who have opposed the Vietnamese war from the beginning, need help badly in their reelection campaigns. Neither are millionaires. They deserve emergency support of all kinds and you can reach them c/o Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. Their defeat would be a catastrophe for the peace movement.

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